

Amendments to the Claims

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1-61 (canceled)

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62. (currently amended) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
positioning a first surgical implant in tissue a patient's body, the first implant having a
unitary structure;
positioning a second implant against the tissue such that a portion of the first implant
extends through the second implant; and
expanding the first surgical implant while the second surgical implant is against the tissue
disposed in the patient's body to thereby secure the second implant to the tissue.

63. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein said step of expanding the
first surgical implant includes absorbing body fluid into the first surgical implant.

64-66 (withdrawn)

67. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including the step of
making a hydrophilic surgical implant, said step of positioning a first surgical implant in tissue
the patient's body includes positioning the hydrophilic implant in tissue the patient's body.

68. (withdrawn)

69. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the first further including
the step of making a surgical implant which is at least partially formed of a biodegradable
material, said step of positioning a surgical implant in a patient's body includes positioning the
surgical implant which is at least partially formed of a biodegradable material in a patient's body.

70. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the first surgical implant is a fastener, said step of positioning a surgical implant in the patient's body includes positioning the fastener in engagement with tissue in the patient's body, said step of expanding the surgical implant includes expanding a portion of the fastener disposed in engagement with tissue in the patient's body.

71. (canceled)

72-75 (withdrawn)

76. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including the step of forming at least a portion of a spacer of expandable material, said step of positioning a first surgical implant in tissue a patient's body includes positioning the spacer in the tissue patient's body, said step of expanding the first surgical implant includes expanding expandable material of the spacer.
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77-95 (withdrawn)

96. (previously added) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the first further including the step of forming a surgical implant has having first and second components, said step of positioning the first surgical implant in tissue the patient's body includes positioning the first and second components of the first surgical implant in the patient's body at a location where they are exposed to body fluid, said step of expanding the first surgical implant includes absorbing body fluid with at least the first component of the first surgical implant and expanding at least the first component of the first surgical implant.

97-102. (withdrawn)

103. (new) A method as set forth in claim 70 wherein the tissue is bone.

104. (new) A method as set forth in claim 103 wherein the second implant is a bone plate.

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105. (new) A method as set forth in claim 103 wherein the portion of the first implant that extends into the bone is unthreaded.

106. (new) A method as set forth in claim 103 wherein the portion of the first implant that extends into the bone is threaded.
